

**Testimony of Marta Daniels in Support of SB1017, HB6578, SB1014  
On Safe Guarding & Expanding Protections for and Access to Voting  
March 11, 2021**

**TO:** GAE Committee Co-Chairs Sen. Flexer and Rep. Fox, Vice Chairs Sen. Haskell and Rep. Thomas, and Ranking Members Sen. Sampson and Rep. Mastrofrancesco and Honorable Members of the GAE Committee

**Please make future voting convenient, safe and accessible for all CT voters by voting out of Committee the following three bills:**

**SB 1017: An Act Concerning Election Administration to make the absentee ballot drop boxes permanent and enable voters to request absentee ballots via an online application.** Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes that were so convenient, safe and secure in 2020 will not be available in future elections *unless this bill is passed*. This bill will allow voters who currently qualify to vote by absentee ballot to have the option of using their town's official and secure absentee ballot drop boxes that they used in 2020.

**HB 6578: An Act Concerning Participation in Electoral Process for Expansion of Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) at state agencies, and restoration of parole voting rights.** This bill codifies and streamlines AVR, as it is happening now at the Dept. of Motor Vehicles, and provides expansion to the Dept. of Social Services (DSS), HUSKY, Access Health CT, state colleges and universities and other state agencies. This is a common-sense reform that saves taxpayer money by eliminating duplications, and helps increase democratic participation.

**By restoring the right to vote to people re-entering their communities on parole also increases democratic participation.** Connecticut has the most stringent criminal disenfranchisement laws in the Northeast and is the only state in the region that still prohibits those on parole from casting a ballot. Disenfranchising parolees sustains a racist system of inequality in our state begun in the Civil War era. Those on parole are concentrated in only a handful of Connecticut communities – those with significant populations of Black and Latino people. Preventing formerly incarcerated people from voting undermines good-faith attempts at reintegration, and artificially decreases the voting power of the communities in which people on parole reside.

**SB 1014: An Act Concerning a Municipal Election Monitor for the 2021 Municipal Election and the 2022 State Election to fund the Election Monitor position for Bridgeport for two years.** The bill that passed in the special session last year used CARES act money and only applied to the 2020 general election. This will provide election officials and voters of Bridgeport the support they need to re-build and restore democracy.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns, and I urge you to vote YES on all 3 bills.

Marta Daniels  
Chester, CT 06412